

VZCZCXRO0284  
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHMOS  
DE RUEHKU #0233 0241438  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 241438Z JAN 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2643  
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS KUWAIT 000233

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ARPI, LONDON TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT VOTES TO RELIEVE AMIR-DESIGNATE; KUWAIT  
TEMPORARILY WITHOUT AN AMIR AND A CROWN PRINCE

REF: KUWAIT 209 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. A late night January 23 meeting between Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and National Guard Commander Shaykh Salem Al-Ali Al-Salem Al-Sabah supposedly set in motion the scenario for the January 24 abdication of Amir-designate Shaykh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. It was agreed that Shaykh Saad would step down and PM Shaykh Sabah would become Kuwait's 15th Amir. Post understands that when a delegation, including Shaykh Sabah and Shaykh Salem, went to Shaykh Saad's residence for photos and Shaykh Saad's blessing of the PM's ascension, Saad's wife, Shaykha Latifa, refused to let them in. Because of the delay, in accordance with the constitution, the National Assembly began deliberations behind closed doors on Shaykh Saad's medical suitability to rule. All 65 members of Parliament (50 elected MPs and 15 Government ministers) voted to relieve Shaykh Saad of his position. Shortly after the vote, Shaykh Saad's son, Shaykh Fahd Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, delivered the letter of abdication to Parliament, too late to make a difference

¶2. All executive authority has been transferred to the Council of Ministers (COM), which has eight days to nominate a new Amir although reports suggest they may nominate PM Shaykh Sabah as early as the evening of January 24. Parliament is expected to convene January 29 or 30 to endorse the COM's nomination. A new Crown Prince must be named within a year.

¶3. The absence of an Amir and Crown Prince has no real effect on GOK policies or relations with the U.S. or other nations. Actions taken by Parliament were in full conformance with the constitution. The impact of the decision is psychological. Most Kuwaitis were elated with the January 23 agreement which they believed honored Shaykh Saad's contributions and resolved the succession issue without parliamentary involvement or too much embarrassment. While there is relief that a decision has finally come, there is disappointment that Shaykh Saad's public life ended the way it did, but considerable pride, particularly among National Assembly members, that constitutional procedures were followed and afforded some dignity and transparency to the succession process.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Visit Embassy Kuwait's Classified Website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/kuwait/>

You can also access this site through the  
State Department's Classified SIPRNET website  
\*\*\*\*\*  
LeBaron